AVATAR

The Last Airbender

Show #306

BOOK THREE: Fire
CHAPTER SIX: "The Avatar and the Firelord"

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As Broadcast Draft
June 27th, 2007

ACT ONE

INT. AANG'S DREAM - NIGHT

A FLAME appears. It grows until... Roku walks out of the fire.

ROKU
1 Aang, it's time you learned my history with Firelord Sozin. You need to understand how the war began... If you want to know how to end it. 1

Roku begins disappearing back into the flames.

ROKU (cont'd)
2 Meet me on my home island on the day of the Summer Solstice. 2

An image of an UNUSUALLY-SHAPED ISLAND appears in the flame.

EXT. KIDS' CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Aang turns over in his sleep.

AANG
(mumbling)
3 Okay, Roku. 3

INT. ZUKO'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Zuko, fast asleep, wakes with a start. He jumps out of bed, runs to his door, and throws it open. At the far end of the long hallway a SHADOWY HOODED FIGURE hustles away. Zuko springs into action to pursue -- but as he does, he inadvertently kicks a SCROLL left in front of his door. His curiosity gets the better of him, and Zuko quits the chase. He unfurls the scroll...

ZUKO
(reading aloud)
4 "You need to know the story of your great grandfather's demise. It will reveal your own destiny." 4

Zuko frowns, wondering what this means.

EXT. AIRSPACE NEAR ROKU'S ISLAND - DAY

A CLOUD glides quickly through the sky -- it looks a little different than the other clouds around it. As we CLOSE IN, we see that this cloud is Appa in his "cloud disguise". Aang peers down at an ISLAND below -- the one from his dream.

AANG
5 There it is -- that's Roku's home. 5

EXT. ROKU'S ISLAND - MOMENTS LATER

7 Appa lands on the island, a barren WASTELAND, which shows no 7
signs of past or present civilization. The gang looks confused.

KATARA
8 But... there's nothing here. 8

Toph slides off Appa. As her feet hit the ground, she PALES.

TOPH
9 Yes there is. An entire village... 9
hundreds of houses... all
completely buried in ash.

Her revelation sinks in, as everyone realizes the horrible catastrophe that must have occurred here.

INT. GALLERY - FIRELORD'S PALACE - DAY

Zuko is loitering in a hallway where family portraits of many past royal family members hang, including (in reverse historical order) OZAI, AZULON, and SOZIN. (If we do see portraits before Sozin, the Firelord directly before him should be male, but beyond that females could be thrown in.) Azula comes down the hallway and sees Zuko.

AZULA
10 It's never too early for a sitting 10
with the court painter, Zuko.
(beat)
11 Make sure he gets your good side! 11

Zuko winces -- that b****! Azula continues down the hall.

ZUKO
(swallowing his pride)
12 Wait. I need to ask you something. 12

She comes back.

ZUKO (cont'd)
13 What do you remember about our 13
great grandfather's history?

Azula gives Zuko a peculiar look.

AZULA
14 Oh Zuko, it's so strange how your mind works. 14

She turns and points to GREAT GRANDFATHER SOZIN'S PORTRAIT. As if reciting a page in a history book:

AZULA (cont'd)
15 Firelord Sozin began the war, of course. He spent his early years secretly preparing for it, but he was as patient as he was clever. He famously waited for the comet -- later renamed Sozin's comet -- and used its power to launch his full scale invasion of the world. In the end he died a very old and successful man. 15

ZUKO
16 But <u>how</u> did he die? 16

AZULA
17 Didn't you pay <u>any</u> attention in school, Zuko? He died peacefully Zuko stands puzzling in front of the portrait. 17

EXT. ROKU'S ISLAND - EVENING

21 It's just before sundown on the SUMMER SOLSTICE. Aang is preparing to meditate (stretching, breathing etc.) as the kids watch. Everyone's attention shifts to Aang who is sitting on a large leaf and hovering a few inches above the ground. With each in-breath he rises, and each out-breath he falls a few inches. As the sun dips below the horizon, his TATTOOS AND EYES GLOW. 21

EXT. ROKU'S ISLAND/SPIRIT WORLD MOUNTAIN TOP - SIMULTANEOUS

From Aang's POV his surroundings FADE as he goes into the CLOUDY, MISTY MOUNTAIN TOP we saw in episode 1.08. Aang is approached by Roku who flies in on his dragon, FANG.

INT. ZUKO'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Zuko tosses and turns, restlessly. Finally he gets out of bed, angrily lights a lamp, and grabs the mysterious scroll. He reads it again.

ZUKO
22 What does it mean?! 22

He scrutinizes the scroll, holding it perilously close to the lamp behind it. In the dimly lit room, we can see the flame flicker behind the thin and slightly translucent parchment. As the flame warms the scroll, a few new words begin to MATERIALIZE -- there's a heat-sensitive message encoded in the paper!

ZUKO (cont'd)
23 (GASP) 23

Zuko carefully moves the scroll over the flame to reveal the secret message.

ZUKO (cont'd)
(reading aloud)
24 "The Fire Sages keep the secret history -- in the Dragonbone Catacombs." 24

EXT. FIRE SAGES' TEMPLE - NIGHT

Cloaked and hooded, Zuko approaches the Temple of the Fire Sages from the shadows. Here and there as Fire Sages pass by, Zuko takes cover. Finally, he scales a wall overlooking a courtyard.

EXT. FIRE SAGES' COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

He watches a Fire Sage use Firebending to open a secret passage in the floor of the yard. (This should be reminiscent of the Fire Temple door in episode 1.08.)

When it's safe, Zuko slips down into the yard and copies the Fire Sage's bending moves to unlock the door.

INT. DRAGONBONE CATACOMBS - CONTINUOUS

Zuko lowers himself into a creepy, winding tunnel beneath the temple. He passes doorways and crypts on either side. He's in the catacombs where the Fire Sages horde their treasures, bury their dead, and hide their secrets. (Like many catacombs these are lined with bones -- dragon bones.)

Something catches Zuko's eye. A RELIEF of Great Grandfather Sozin (this should be a relief version of the portrait we saw in the gallery, so that we are sure to recognize it) is carved into the doorway of a chamber. Zuko lets himself into the pitch dark room.

INT. SOZIN ROOM - CATACOMBS - CONTINUOUS

Zuko Firebends a flame and we see a spider-webby, dusty collection of SOZIN RELICS and AFFECTS.

Zuko goes through them, searching for something significant. At last there's nothing left but a FORBIDDING-LOOKING URN. Zuko steals himself and reaches in. He grasps... a SCROLL. He dusts it off and reads:

ZUKO
25 "The final testament of Firelord Sozin." 25

EXT. ROKU'S ISLAND/SPIRIT WORLD MOUNTAIN TOP - SIMULTANEOUS

Roku ushers Aang onto Fang's back, then he joins him.

ROKU
26 Come, Aang. 26

AANG
27 Where are we going? 27

ROKU
28 To visit my past, our shared past. 28

INT. SOZIN ROOM - CATACOMBS - SIMULTANEOUS

Zuko has lit a small lamp and settled in to read Great Grandfather Sozin's testament. He/we hear Sozin begin to tell his story:

SOZIN (V.O.)
29 As I feel my own life dimming, I can't help but think of a time when everything was so much brighter. I remember my friend... 29

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK:

EXT. PALACE GROUNDS - DISTANT PAST - DAY

Two well dressed teenage boys fight fiercely with Firebending. We will soon reveal that these two are TEENAGE ROKU and TEENAGE SOZIN.

Despite their young age, the boys fight with incredible skill and vehemence. Though they seem equally matched, one boy (soon to be revealed as Teenage Roku), stumbles over a TREE ROOT. The other boy, Teenage Sozin, seizes his sudden advantage by delivering a quick, lethal-looking blow -- it's slightly dirty fighting. Teenage Roku falls to the ground.

TEENAGE SOZIN
30 Looks like I win again, Roku. 30

TEENAGE ROKU
31 Are you kidding? The tree root did all the work! 31

Teenage Sozin EXTENDS his hand and helps Teenage Roku up.

TEENAGE ROKU (cont'd)
(with no hard feelings)
32 Nice one, Sozin. 32

THE CAMERA WIDENS TO REVEAL: Aang and Roku, looking on unseen from the vantage of the Spirit World, "A Christmas Carol"-style. Aang can't believe his ears.

AANG
(to Roku)
33 You were friends with Firelord Sozin?! 33

ROKU
(smiling)
34 Back then he was just Prince Sozin. And he was my best friend. 34

Roku and Aang continue observing as the scene continues. A beautiful girl, TA MIN, not un-Katara like (and not unlike Zuko's mom, Ursa, too), is walking down a nearby road. She passes the boys by without a second look. But when Teenage Roku sees her he's obviously completely LOVE-STRUCK. Teenage Sozin notices.

TEENAGE SOZIN
(stage whisper)
35 Say something to her! 35

Teenage Roku tries to speak, but no words come out.

TEENAGE ROKU
36 Uh-- 36

Ta Min is gone. Teenage Roku flops back on the grass in defeat, looking way worse than after teenage Sozin's blow.

ROKU
37 Love is hard when you're young. 37

AANG
38 You don't have to tell me. 38

ROKU
39 Don't worry, it gets better. 39
(beat)
(MORE)

ROKU (cont'd)
40 Now come with me, we have a party to attend... 40

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROYAL GARDEN - DISTANT PAST - EVENING

Aang and Roku enter the scene of a party in progress. They look on as YOUNG PARTY GUESTS romp in a garden decked out with lanterns and streamers. Teenage Roku and Sozin appear and the guests CHEER for both of them.

AANG
(to Roku)
41 Wait, whose party is it? 41

ROKU
42 Sozin and I shared many things, including a birthday. 42

Teenage Sozin makes the rounds, mingling with guests. It's obvious he's the prince -- like a celebrity presence at a Hollywood party, all active and passive attention seems to revolve around him. Teenage Roku mingles too, but he's distracted. He keeps stealing glances at Ta Min.

There's a sudden HUSH in the garden. FIRE SAGES, looking oddly out of place, have appeared. Everyone waits to see what they want. Teenage Sozin PALES -- he thinks this can only mean one thing.

TEENAGE SOZIN
(somber, to Fire Sages)
43 Did something happen to my father? 43

FIRE SAGE
44 No, Prince Sozin. We are not here for you. We're here to announce the identity of the next Avatar. 44

CROWD
45 (GASPS, WHISPERS, CHATTER) 45

FIRE SAGE
46 It is our honor to serve you... Avatar Roku. 46

The Fire Sages bow down to teenage Roku, who looks as surprised as anyone else at the party.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO *

INT. SOZIN ROOM - CATACOMBS - NIGHT

In the feeble light of a tiny lamp, Zuko pours over Sozin's scroll. *

SOZIN (V.O.)

48 Soon the day came when my friend Roku had to leave the Fire Nation and face his destiny as the Avatar. He needed to travel the world so he could master the other elements. 48

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK:

INT. TEENAGE ROKU'S ROOM - DISTANT PAST - DAY

Teenage Sozin comes into Teenage Roku's room where he's sitting on his bed. Teenage Sozin sees an empty trunk, but notices none of teenage Roku's stuff is packed.

TEENAGE SOZIN
(a little obnoxious)

49 Hey, why aren't you packed yet, all-powerful "Avatar?" 49

When Teenage Roku doesn't respond:

TEENAGE SOZIN (cont'd)

50 Come on, show me how it's done using all four kinds of bending! 50

Teenage Sozin gives Teenage Roku a playful SHOVE.

TEENAGE ROKU
(glum)

51 I started packing, but then the Fire Sages told me I won't need any "worldly possessions" anymore. 51

TEENAGE SOZIN

52 Oh. 52

TEENAGE ROKU

53 It happened so fast. Everything's going to be different now. 53

For a moment neither one seems to know what to say to the other. It's awkward. Teenage Sozin realizes how strange his friend must be feeling right now.

TEENAGE SOZIN
54 Here, I hope you're at least allowed to have this. 54

Teenage Sozin removes his own TOPKNOT HOLDER and gives it to Teenage Roku.

TEENAGE ROKU
55 But this is a royal artifact. It's supposed to be worn by the crown prince... 55

TEENAGE SOZIN
56 I want you to have it. 56

Teenage Roku puts the TOPKNOT HOLDER in his hair, and we recognize it as the one he wears today. Teenage Roku bows to teenage Sozin.

BACK TO PRESENT:

EXT. ROKU'S ISLAND - NIGHT

Like kids totally absorbed in a favorite TV show, Toph, Katara and Sokka watch Aang's body as he meditates. Aang shifts. He slowly stands. Aang slowly stretches one leg up and out. Now he SQUATS with his feet far apart and... LOWERS himself.

KATARA
(anxious)
57 Do they have bathrooms in the Spirit World?! 57

SOKKA
(matter of fact)
58 As a matter of fact, they do not. 58

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SKY - FANG'S BACK - DAY

Aang and Roku fly on Fang's back through the airspace we (might) recognize as the approach to the Southern Air Temple.

AANG
59 Hey, we're almost at the Southern Air Temple! 59

ROKU
60 This was the first stop on my Avatar journey. 60
(MORE)

ROKU (cont'd)
It was the place where I was trained to master Airbending and also where I met an old friend of yours, Monk Gyatso.

EXT. SOUTHERN AIR TEMPLE - DISTANT PAST - CONTINUOUS

Fang lands, so Aang and Roku can observe -- unnoticed, as always. They see a group of YOUNG MONKS, including Teenage Roku who wears traditional Air Monk garments, but stands out as the only monk with hair. The young monks are standing with their gliders, listening to Monk Xay.

Monk Xay takes off on his glider and the young monks follow, two by two. Teenage Roku flies beside his partner -- it's PRETEEN MONK GYATSO!

AANG
64 No way! 64

They turn to watch Young Roku and Gyatso fly, possibly following them on Fang, if that helps.

ANGLE ON: The flying teens.

TEENAGE ROKU
65 Hey Gyatso, you want to see a new glider trick? 65

Gyatso and teenage Roku break the line and do some AWESOME GLIDER ACROBATICS. Young Gyatso is impressed. Now he wants to show Roku his own new trick...

PRETEEN GYATSO
66 Ha ha ha. Check this out! 66

With a quick move he FLIPS his glider so it's beneath him under his belly. He grips the edge and swiftly POPS up so he's standing on it -- he's AIRSURFING! (Note: Please use real surfing for reference.)

Aang turns to Roku. *

AANG
68 He's Airsurfing! I can't believe I never thought of that. 68

67 PRETEEN GYATSO 67
(EXCITED SCREAMS)

But after a few awesome moments, Gyatso loses control. Teenage Roku SWOOPS in to catch him just as Gyatso's glider falls away.

They awkwardly fly piggy-back, and crash land into the students who've landed ahead of them. Monk Xay stands above them, disapprovingly. *

AANG
70 That's amazing. I can't believe you were friends with Monk Gyatso, just like I was. 70

ROKU
71 Some friendships are so strong they can even transcend lifetimes. 71

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - STREAM - DISTANT PAST - DAY

ROKU (V.O.)
72 After my years mastering Airbending, I traveled to the Northern Water Tribe. Waterbending was especially challenging for me, but in time I mastered it as well... 72

Roku, now a YOUNG ADULT (age 20?), works out with a Waterbending master. We see some of his early frustrating attempts at Waterbending.

Then a few years later, we see his progress: The master sends a wall of water at Roku, who splits it in two and sends the halves back, twisting them into a whirlpool around his attacker. Roku has clearly mastered Waterbending.

EXT. EARTH NATION - QUARRY - DISTANT PAST - DAY

ROKU (V.O.)
73 I moved on to the Earth Kingdom. My Earthbending master, Sud, was uncompromising, stubborn, and blunt... and a lifelong friend. 73

ADULT ROKU (age 25) works out with Earthbending Master, Sud. The two of them chase each other around the inside of the quarry walls by bending rock-like stairs and chutes out of the rock in an elaborate game of "rock-tag." Adult Roku has mastered Earthbending.

EXT. LOCATION CONTAINING ALL 4 ELEMENTS - DISTANT PAST

ROKU (V.O.)
74 It was bitter work... but the results were worth it. 74

We see an awesome shot of Adult Roku bending all four elements. (This could be the shot of the Avatar bending all the elements in the opening credits -- only with Roku at the appropriate age if necessary.)

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SOZIN ROOM - CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Zuko is completely engrossed in the scroll he is reading.

SOZIN (V.O.)

75 Twelve long years passed before I saw my friend again. When Roku returned, he was a fully realized Avatar. And I had changed as well. 75

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK:

INT. FIRELORD'S THRONE ROOM - DISTANT PAST - DAY

ADULT ROKU (28), now a fully-realized Avatar, has returned to the Fire Nation to see his old friend, Sozin. ADULT SOZIN (28) is seated on the throne -- he's the Firelord now.

(NOTE TO DESIGNER: because this throne room ends up completely destroyed, this version could be different from the design we ordinarily use.)

ADULT ROKU

76 Sozin! Or should I say "Firelord?" 76

Instead of getting up to greet his old friend, Adult Sozin coolly observes Adult Roku from where he sits. But Adult Roku is unintimidated. He keeps walking towards the throne.

ADULT SOZIN
(deadly serious)

77 Customarily, my subjects bow before greeting me. 77

Roku pauses, a little unsure of where his friend is going with this.

ADULT SOZIN (cont'd)

78 But you're the exception. 78

Adult Sozin gets up and warmly EMBRACES Adult Roku. In the background of the scene we reveal Roku and Aang watching.

ROKU
79 After all these years he was still my best friend. And a few months later, he was my best man... 79

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROYAL GARDEN - MONTHS LATER - GOLDEN HOUR

A wedding ceremony has just been completed. The bride turns to face the guests -- it's ADULT TA MIN! She's dressed in traditional Asian bridal garments and makeup. A GONG strikes and she walks out from under a bower. The wedding procession begins, and the groom follows her -- it's Adult Roku!

THE CAMERA WIDENS TO REVEAL: Aang and Roku observing the scene.

AANG
80 Roku, it's that girl who didn't even know you were alive. 80

ROKU
(remembering fondly)
81 Ta Min. 81
(beat)
82 I was persistent. When love is real, it finds a way. And being the Avatar doesn't hurt your chances with the ladies, either. 82

Roku smiles. The procession continues, and we see Adult Ta Min and Adult Roku BOW to honored guests -- including Firelord Sozin.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROYAL GARDEN - WEDDING BANQUET - DISTANT PAST - LATER

SOZIN (V.O.)
83 On wedding days we look to the future with optimism and joy. 83
84 I had my own vision for a brighter future... 84

The party is lively. Adult Roku and Adult Ta Min are dancing when Adult Sozin cuts in. (It looks like he's cutting in to dance.)

ADULT SOZIN
85 Excuse me. 85
(to Ta Min)
86 May I borrow him for a moment? 86

ADULT TA MIN
(making a joke)
87 It's not very traditional, but okay. 87

Adult Sozin leads adult Roku away from the party.

ADULT ROKU
88 What's on your mind? 88

ADULT SOZIN
89 I've been thinking hard about the state of the world lately -- 89

ADULT ROKU
90 Sozin, it's my wedding. Have a cookie! Dance with someone! Lighten up! 90

ADULT SOZIN
91 I know, I know, but just hear me out. 91

Adult Roku NODS, "Go on." Adult Sozin PUTS HIS ARM around his shoulder, and they walk together.

ADULT SOZIN (cont'd)
92 Right from the start I was destined to be Firelord, and although we didn't always know it, you were destined to be the Avatar. It's an amazing stroke of fate we know each other so well, isn't it? Together we could do... anything. 92

Adult Roku looks wary, but he listens.

ADULT ROKU
93 Yeah, we could. 93

Adult Sozin GESTURES BROADLY, enjoying the moment.

ADULT SOZIN
94 Our nation is enjoying an unprecedented time of peace and wealth -- our people are happy, and we're so fortunate in so many ways. 94

ADULT ROKU
95 Where are you going with this? 95

ADULT SOZIN
96 I've been thinking... we should share this prosperity with the rest of the world. In our hands is the most successful empire in history... 96

Adult Sozin stops Adult Roku and looks him in the eye.

ADULT SOZIN (cont'd)
97 It's time we expanded it! 97

As Adult Roku realizes the significance of this proposition, his expression changes to deadly serious.

ADULT ROKU
98 No. The four nations are meant to be just that: four. 98

ADULT SOZIN
99 Roku, you haven't even stopped to consider the possibilities -- 99

ADULT ROKU
100 There are no possibilities. This is the last I want to hear about this. 100

Adult Roku walks away. We WIDEN TO REVEAL Aang and Roku watching the scene.

ROKU
101 That was my first real test as the Avatar. 101

EXT. OCCUPIED EARTH KINGDOM ISLAND - DISTANT PAST

ROKU (V.O.)
102 Unfortunately it was many years before I learned that Sozin had gone ahead with his plan, despite my warning... 102

Roku, now MIDDLE-AGED ROKU (age 45), flies over an Earth Kingdom island with his dragon, Fang. Middle-aged Roku looks closely at the landscape and sees it is obviously being mined by the Fire Nation. (The Fire Nation insignia has been boldly slapped on over existing Earth Kingdom ones.) Maybe he flies over a few other signs of military occupation as well...

INT. FIRELORD'S THRONE ROOM - DISTANT PAST - LATER

MIDDLE-AGED SOZIN (age 45) is startled as the doors of the throne room are thrown open with a BOOM. Middle-aged Roku strides in.

MIDDLE-AGED ROKU
103 I've seen the colonies, Sozin. How dare you occupy Earth Kingdom territory?! 103

Middle-aged Sozin sits quietly. He knew this would happen eventually.

MIDDLE-AGED SOZIN
104 How dare you, a citizen of the Fire Nation, address your Firelord this way? Your loyalty is to our nation first. Anything less makes you a traitor. 104

MIDDLE-AGED ROKU
105 Don't do this, Sozin -- don't challenge me. It will only end badly. 105
(after a beat, calmly)
106 It's over. 106

Middle-aged Roku turns and begins to walk away.

MIDDLE-AGED SOZIN
107 (ENRAGED SCREAM) 107

Middle-aged Sozin seizes this opportunity to attack Roku from behind, but Roku is ready for him.

A battle of monumental proportions ensues. Middle-aged Sozin may be the most powerful Firebender we've seen, but Middle-aged Roku asserts his supremacy over all the elements. (The throne room is completely destroyed in process.) Finally, Middle-aged Roku has Middle-aged Sozin totally at his mercy. Only a single shot stands to separate Middle-aged Sozin from his life.

MIDDLE-AGED ROKU
108 I'm sparing you, Sozin. 108

Middle-aged Roku releases Middle-aged Sozin who begins crawling away through smoking rubble that was the throne room.

MIDDLE-AGED ROKU (cont'd)

109 I'm letting you go in the name of our past friendship. But I warn you -- 109

Middle-aged Roku goes over and drags Middle-aged Sozin up so he can look him square in the eye.

MIDDLE-AGED ROKU (cont'd)
(deadly serious)

110 Even a single step out of line will result in your permanent end. 110

Middle-aged Sozin meets Middle-aged Roku's glare defiantly -- then he BLINKS -- then looks down, defeated.

END OF ACT TWO

*

ACT THREE

EXT. ROKU'S ISLAND - ROKU'S HOUSE - DISTANT PAST

Aang and Roku stand in front of a rustic-looking house.

ROKU
114 Sozin and I didn't speak or see each other for twenty-five years after our battle. I spent most of my spare time here... at my home. 114

INT. ROKU'S HOUSE - DISTANT PAST

Roku, the age he is now ("old"), is fast asleep in his bed. Next to him sleeps OLD TA MIN. Suddenly the ground QUAKES so violently that Roku and Old Ta Min are dumped from their bed onto the ground. FEARFUL SHOUTS and CRIES come from outside in the village. Roku picks himself up and stumbles outside -- (NOTE: He leaves the TOPKNOT HOLDER behind on a bedside table, and we should see at least a brief shot of it left behind.)

EXT. ROKU'S HOUSE - DISTANT PAST - DAY, BUT BLACK AS NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Roku steps out into complete darkness, only to be laid low by a COUGHING FIT.

ROKU
115 (COUGHING FIT) 115

The air is thick with ash and poisonous gases. There is a terrifying RUMBLING. The volcano on his island is active again!

ROKU (cont'd)
(to old Ta Min)
116 Let's go! 116

They cover their faces with their sleeves. Roku BENDS the air around them as best he can so they can see, creating a narrow "clean air" tunnel for himself and Ta Min -- but they still nearly trip over a WOMAN and her KIDS who are lying on the ground CHOKING. Old Ta Min tears pieces of curtain from a nearby window and hands them to the woman and kids.

He continues to bend the air around them, leading them through the swirling smoke and ash to safety.

EXT. PALACE LOOK OUT - DISTANT PAST - CONTINUOUS

We can hear the volcanic rumbling like distant thunder, and we can see the GIANT PLUME OF BLACK ASH on the horizon, even hundreds of miles away. We widen to reveal OLD SOZIN is taking this in from a palace balcony.

SOZIN (V.O.)

118 Roku's island was a hundred miles away, but I could still feel it rumbling and see the black plume of smoke. I had never seen anything like this catastrophe. 118

Suddenly there is a DEAFENING, EARTH-SHAKING VOLCANIC EXPLOSION! The BOOM causes him to cover his ears and stumble backwards, even at this distance.

EXT. ROKU'S ISLAND - DISTANT PAST - DAY, BUT BLACK AS NIGHT

Roku braves the elements: air thick with ash, poisonous gasses, lava flows, volcanic explosions, rocks raining down, steam and fog created by lava flowing into the sea, tidal waves, earthquakes, etc.

He shows an impressive amount of multi-bending prowess as he diverts lava flows, quells tsunamis, and bends in cleaner air, in order to clear safe escape routes for his people. For a moment it looks as if he may have a chance of succeeding.

WE WIDEN TO REVEAL AANG AND ROKU are watching.

AANG

119 This is amazing, Roku! You're battling a volcano -- and you're winning! 119

ROKU

120 Unfortunately, my success didn't last, Aang. There was no way I could do it all. 120

There's a shift: Roku discovers a GROUP OF PEOPLE who have been trapped between two lava flows. Their safe spot in the middle is quickly disappearing.

Roku, who is nearly overwhelmed as it is, stops to rescue this endangered group with one-hand. Simultaneously, he tries to keep lava flows, tsunamis, and land slides in-check with his other hand.

With Earthbending he extracts the piece of land the group is stranded on, and guides it to safety down on the shore where boats are shuttling islanders away, amidst rising chaos. But his inattention costs him. As he heads back up the side of the volcano he's barraged by another EXPLOSION. The people on the shore lose sight of him and fear the worst.

And it looks like they're right.

EXT. RIM OF ROKU'S VOLCANO - CONTINUOUS

Roku is inundated with showers of lava as he tries to bend GIANT SLABS OF ROCK AND EARTH OVER THE TOP OF THE VOLCANO to temporarily stop it up. It's a desperate attempt to give his people a few extra minutes to escape. It's so dark he can't see anything except in the split-seconds when LIGHTNING strikes inside the volcanic cloud. As Roku fights the volcano he is surprised by a blast of NOXIOUS GAS (may want to make it yellowish like sulfur, to distinguish it from smoke), which he accidentally inhales.

ROKU
123 (EXTENDED GAGGING AND COUGHING -- long enough to go under his V.O.) 123

ROKU (V.O.) (cont'd)
124 Battling the elements was hard enough -- I had to do it while I could barely breathe. The poisonous volcanic gases were overwhelming. 124

Above him, Fang flies as close as he can, unwilling to leave his master, but kept at bay by molten explosions.

FANG
125 (TERRIFIED FRUSTRATED ROARS) 125

Roku calls into the void:

ROKU
126 It's alright, Fang! (MORE COUGHING AND HACKING) Get out of here! I'm fine -- 126

Suddenly Roku hears a FAINT CRY. He strains to hear a BABY'S CRIES. Now he can't decide what to do. If he stops bending he, and everyone else, will perish. But the CRIES continue. He hesitates; completely torn. Just then there's a voice behind him:

SOZIN (O.S.)
127 Need a hand, old friend? 127

Sozin has arrived to help.

ROKU
128 Sozin?! 128

SOZIN
129 There's not a moment to waste. 129

Sozin climbs off his BLACK DRAGON and he and Roku jump into action. Sozin takes over for Roku at the volcano. Using Firebending, he begins forcing the fire and lava back down into the earth.

EXT. FIELD NEAR RIM OF VOLCANO - CONTINUOUS

Roku finds a lost MOTHER and BABY trapped in a crushed hut by some fallen rocks. He rescues them with Earthbending and delivers them to the relative safety of a life raft.

EXT. RIM OF ROKU'S VOLCANO - MOMENTS LATER

Now Roku and Sozin work together on the rim of the volcano bending fire and earth. They work together so smoothly and skillfully, it's as if they've been doing this all their lives: the two greatest benders of their day working in awesome synchronicity.

They've been able to give the islanders the minutes they need to escape. But now the DEAFENING ROAR of the imploding volcano blocks out all sound. Roku and Sozin flee, managing to stay just a short distance ahead of the THOUSAND-DEGREE PYROCLASMIC FLOW which chases them as they run side by side. As they make their escape, there is another large VENT of NOXIOUS GAS...

ROKU
(raspy)
130 Don't breathe the toxic gas! 130

He quickly BENDS some of it away from Sozin, but he himself can not avoid inhaling more.

ROKU (cont'd)
131 (COUGHING AND CHOKING) It's too much... 131

He collapses to the ground, exhausted and overcome.

ROKU (cont'd)
132 (GASPING AND WHEEZING) Please... 132

He reaches up to Sozin for help. His head swims, and he sees Sozin hesitate.

SOZIN
(sotto)
133 Without you, all my plans are suddenly possible. I have a vision for the future, Roku... 133

Roku's eyes WIDEN as he realizes Sozin will not help him. Within seconds, Sozin escapes on his black dragon. They skim away through THICK ASH FALLING ACROSS THE WATER. Fang flies lower, trying to save Roku, who has collapsed.

FANG
134 (HOWLS) 134

The pyroclasmic flow swallows Roku. Ignoring certain death, Fang flies into it after him.

FLASH TO WHITE.

SFX: We hear the sound of a BABY CRYING.

FADE IN:

INT. ELSEWHERE - A MOMENT LATER

As the whiteness clears, we see a NEWBORN BABY.

THE CAMERA WIDENS TO REVEAL AANG AND ROKU watching.

AANG
135 Who's --? Wait, that's me, isn't it? 135

Roku NODS. Then he begins disappearing.

ROKU
136 Make sense of our past, Aang, and you will bring peace and restore balance in the world. 136

AANG
(calling after him)
137 Roku? Roku...? 137

Aang starts fading too. His journey with Roku has come to an end.

INT. SOZIN ROOM - CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Zuko reads Sozin's final words.

SOZIN (V.O.)
138 With Roku gone and the great comet returning, the timing was perfect to change the world. 138

We see Sozin's numerous troops in training.

SOZIN (V.O.) (cont'd)
139 I knew the next Avatar would be born an Air Nomad -- so I wiped out the Air Temples... 139

We see Sozin's armies invade and decimate the Air Temples.

SOZIN (V.O.) (cont'd)
140 But somehow the new Avatar eluded me. I've wasted the remainder of my life searching in vain. 140
(Ahab-esque)
141 I know he's hiding out there somewhere -- the Fire Nation's greatest threat -- the last Airbender! 141

It's the last line of the scroll. Zuko's confused. He checks the other side of the paper -- nothing.

ZUKO
142 That can't be it. Where's the rest of it? 142

He looks around, but there isn't anything else. This is it.

INT. UNCLE'S JAIL CELL - DAY

Zuko walks down the hall to the chamber where Uncle is being held. At the sound of FOOTSTEPS Uncle looks up. He doesn't look entirely surprised to see Zuko. Nor does he say a word. Zuko holds up the scroll and shakes it at Uncle.

ZUKO
143 You sent this, didn't you?! 143

Uncle watches Zuko, poker-faced.

ZUKO (cont'd)
144 I found the "secret history." Which, by the way, should be renamed, the "history most people already know." The note said that I needed to know about my great grandfather's death -- but he was still alive in the end! 144

UNCLE
(quietly)
145 No, he wasn't. 145

Zuko is stunned into silence.

ZUKO
146 What are you talking about? 146

UNCLE
147 You have more than one great grandfather, Prince Zuko. Sozin was your father's grandfather. 147
(beat)
148 Your mother's grandfather was Avatar Roku. 148

Zuko hates knowing.

ZUKO
(furious)
149 WHY are you telling me this?! 149

UNCLE
(gently)
150 Because understanding the struggle between your two great grandfathers can help you better understand the battle within yourself. 150

Zuko slides to the floor and sits there with his head in his hands.

UNCLE (cont'd)
151 Evil and good are always at war inside you, Zuko. It is your nature: your legacy. 151

As much as Zuko doesn't want to hear this, it makes sense. He listens.

UNCLE (cont'd)
152 But there is a bright side. 152

Zuko looks up. He can hardly wait to hear what this might be.

UNCLE (cont'd)
153 What happened generations ago can be resolved now: by <u>you</u>. Because of your legacy, you alone can cleanse the sins of our family and the Fire Nation. 153
(MORE)

UNCLE (cont'd)
Born in you, along with all the strife, is the power to restore balance to the world.

Zuko takes this in. Uncle removes a LOOSE BRICK in his cell revealing a small hiding space. He pulls out something wrapped in cloth.

UNCLE (cont'd)
154 This is a royal artifact. It's supposed to be worn by the crown prince. 154

Uncle unwraps the cloth to reveal ROKU'S TOPKNOT HOLDER. He passes it to Zuko.

EXT. ROKU'S ISLAND - DAY

Aang has just finished telling the gang about what he learned about Roku and Sozin's history.

KATARA
(shocked)
155 ... You mean after all Roku and Sozin went through together, even after Roku showed him mercy, Sozin betrayed him like that?! 155

Aang nods sadly.

TOPH
156 It's like these people are born bad. 156

AANG
157 No -- That's wrong! I don't think that was the point of what Roku showed me at all. 157

They look at Aang, confused.

SOKKA
158 Then what was the point? 158

AANG
159 Roku was just as much Fire Nation as Sozin was, right? If anything, their story proves anyone's capable of great good and great evil. Everyone, even the Firelord and the Fire Nation have to be treated like they're worth giving a chance. 159

He looks around at everyone.

AANG (cont'd)
160 And I also think it was about friendships. 160

There's a beat as everyone looks at the others.

TOPH
161 Do you really think friendships can last more than one lifetime? 161

AANG
162 I don't see why not. 162

He reaches out to hold Toph's hand, Katara holds Toph's other hand.

SOKKA
163 Well, scientifically speaking, there's no way to prove-- 163

KATARA
(annoyed)
164 Oh, Sokka, just hold hands! 164

END OF SHOW